CHAPTER XVII

GOWNS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

OUTING SUITS

THE general trend of the up-to-date girl is toward athletics; of course, the natural sequence is a becoming costume. The athletic girl or woman must necessarily have much good common sense and a will and mind of her own. Many women have become quite adept at contriving a good-looking as well as comfortable gown for sport. Here are a few fundamental guides to this sort of costuming. First, the material should be of good quality and of a color which will shed the dust and stand quite hard wear. The skirt should be short, at least four inches from the ground. As only a girdle is worn, the waist should be made on the blouse model; the neck should be finished by a turned-down collar, which gives freedom to the throat, and the sleeves elbow length. Bloomers should be worn in place
of petticoats and undergarments. These suggestions are intended for outdoor sports.

The materials for these costumes are flannel, corduroy, tweeds, serges, and light-weight woolens; for the washable materials, piqué, linen, and denim are the most serviceable. The skirt of an outing or an athletic gown is best opened at the side of the front, and should be secured to the waist by hooks and eyes, or by a buttonhole tab sewn on the waist, and buttons on the skirt. The regulation gymnasium suit is usually made of blue serge, blouse and bloomers; these are made very full. Black stockings and gymnasium shoes complete the outfit. A bathing suit should accompany the gymnasium suit; this may be made of denim or brilliantine; the waist and bloomers are attached, the neck cut a little low, and the sleeves reaching above the elbow.

THE RAINY-DAY COSTUME

Every woman owes it to herself and those interested in her to take care of her health. To neglect to prepare for stormy and inclement weather in the matter of proper clothing is certainly responsible for much ill health and unhappiness. A short skirt of waterproof cloth or
serge should be in every woman's wardrobe. A cloak of some sort of waterproof material and unbroken rubbers are absolutely indispensable for a woman if she has to be out of doors in stormy weather. The skirt should escape the ground by four inches, in order that the ankles may be kept dry. There should be two pairs of rubbers, a storm pair and a pair of sandals for damp weather. Women who go to business should have rubbers and an umbrella at their business places and the same at their homes, so that they may always be prepared. Cravenette cloaks are made full length from the neck to the feet, and are quite attractively gotten up in tans and Oxford grays. There is, too, an arrangement of three capes which serves to keep the rain from the upper part of the body, but does not protect the skirt. A veil should also be provided for stormy weather, as it is almost impossible to keep one's hat in the proper position in a storm.

MATERNITY GOWNS

When a gown of this kind becomes necessary, much thought should be given to it. As health, comfort, and a good appearance are the requisites, we will think of those gowns which will com-
bine all three. To begin with, the weight, which should be as light as possible, must be suspended in some fashion from the shoulders, not from the waist or hips. The gown should be designed in such a way as to allow for expansion without altering the appearance. A gown of this style which proved very successful had the darts in the waist lining laced, and as it became necessary the lacing was made looser.

A maternity gown should not be made of a conspicuous color for the street; indistinctly striped cheviots, tweeds, or cashmeres are suitable materials. The skirt should be of a style which is fashionable, but one which may be adapted to this condition. The skirt should be made long, that is, to cover the feet; particular attention must be given to the front gore; it must be cut broader at top and longer; instead of being cut in a dip it must be longer in the center of the gore than at the sides. The waist belt should be much longer than
usual, about four or five inches. This extra width may be held in by an elastic put in like a drawing string in a casing at the top of the skirt. The back of the skirt should be laid in plaits like an ordinary skirt. If the back below the waist line is very flat a little pad made of three or four silk ruffles may be worn in place of a bustle. It will add much to the appearance of the back. The waist should be made with a puff or blouse in front. A coat effect, which should reach below the waist line over the hips, is most becoming and appropriate. The skirt should be attached to the waist by three hooks placed on the three back seams and three eyes sewn on the skirt at distances to correspond to the spaces between the hooks on the waist. In this manner the weight of the skirt is carried by the waist. For the house, tea-gowns, loose flowing affairs of silk or challie or some other light-weight material will help toward comfort and a good appearance. Short, fancy dressing sacks are also appropriate.

If a cloak or wrap is desired, the many styles of loose box coats seem to fill this need. Taffeta silks in dark colors, or light-weight cheviots, would make quite a comfortable wrap. A tight-fitting cloak or wrap should never be worn at
this time. Every garment should be as loose and comfortable as good taste will allow. It is not necessary to dispense absolutely with a fitted waist. As a substitute for the corset which some women seem to need, I would suggest a Ferris waist or a corset cover made of heavy muslin into which a few strips of featherbone have been sewn. This waist will give the necessary support to the back. The darts could be laced and let out when necessary.

The petticoats and undergarments should be made of light-weight materials; if warmth is to be considered they may be made of woolen materials.

CORRECT MOURNING

To all of us at some time comes the sorrowful occasion when we must express our grief by means of mourning clothes. This custom has always been followed, although nowadays some of us throw custom to the winds in this matter and wear no outward sign of grief. But mourning is worn by the majority, so there must be fashions and styles to meet its demand. Comparatively few women know what is correct mourning or what fabrics are worn or how they should be made. Good mourning, including crape, of course,
is very handsome and refined in appearance; it seems quite expensive, but when the durability of the material is considered that impression should be dispelled.

When selecting mourning materials in the shops, insist upon having a good light on them, as there are different shades of black. Only the blackest shade is considered mourning. Blue blacks are not appropriate on account of the bluish shade, and the brownish blacks appear shabby and rusty.

The length of time one wears mourning should be determined by one’s feelings in the matter, and not by any arbitrary rule; however, there are certain formalities in mourning which good taste prompts us to follow. The deepest mourning is that worn by a widow, who wears crape at least one year. Her gown should be of some soft, smooth, silky material such as henrietta; the Priestly is the kind most approved. This gown may be trimmed with crape or mourning silk and should be made on the “simple elegance” plan. A few suggestions about the use of crape will prove valuable to the home dressmaker. Crape is made with the grooves or crimps running diagonally; when it is cut on the bias these crimps
will be found running up and down; when cut on the straight the crimps run on the bias, so that care must be taken before cutting the material, as a good quality is quite expensive, to have the pattern placed on the proper grain. Crape is so pliable that it can be shaped or molded to almost any shape; it should be basted smoothly on a foundation of soft crinoline which holds it in shape. The right side of crape is the raised side or the side on which the crimps run from left to right diagonally. Crape is not a very durable material, and should be placed on the gown in such a manner that it may easily be renewed or removed and some other trimming put on in its place. It takes the dust and becomes rusty looking after very little wear. When crape is laid aside plain black gowns and hats are worn, and these in time give place to black and white, grays, and lavenders. Many widows wear only black as long as they remain in that state, which in many cases means the remainder of their lives, particularly when they have passed middle life. The crape veil is not worn very much in America; it is replaced by a nun’s veiling and net veils which may be had ready to wear. The nun’s veiling has a border woven in it so that it is ready to put on the hat
when bought. The net veils are more elaborate; many of them are made of a heavy net with a very coarse mesh; a double hem of crape is slip-stitched around the four sides, making the veil quite handsome.

For a parent, mourning is worn two years; black for one year and black and white, grays, etc., during the second year. For a sister or brother about the same rule is followed. Crape is very little used for any except the husband or parent. Black is so very somber and unbecoming at the neck that even widows wear a band of white at the throat. White shirt waists with black skirts, belts, etc., are far more sanitary and sensible in hot weather than black ones, and many wear them after a few months have elapsed. A string of black beads will help carry out the mourning idea. When mourning is put aside it is very poor taste to put on any very bright or conspicuous colored dresses; dark blue, brown, or mixed cheviots or serges are very appropriate materials for this time. One word I feel I must say about those veils which some women affect when they put on mourning; those which have a deep border of crape which when placed over the hat reach anywhere from the mouth to the shoul-
ders. If some of those women could only see themselves in those veils I am sure no amount of grief could persuade them to don them. Pure white is considered deep mourning; it must be dead white, not cream white, and is usually worn in the house.

Ostrich feathers, velvet, jet, gold jewelry are not worn during the term of mourning. For first mourning folds and tucks are considered the most appropriate arrangement of trimming; crochet buttons and chiffon trimming are also in good form. Black taffeta silk is considered mourning, provided it has not a great luster.

A BRIDAL TROUSSEAU OR OUTFIT

The preparation for a wedding in the matter of an outfit requires much thought; all sides of the question must be considered, the contents of the purse being the first, and even for a very simple outfit or trousseau it must be pretty well filled. The station in society which the bride-to-be occupies before marriage and the one she will occupy when she marries must determine the extent of her wardrobe. Any sensible woman will prefer to have her underclothes both plentiful and of good quality. The outer clothes should be appropriate
and of sufficient number to meet any position in which she may find herself. Every girl should at the least have six full suits of underwear; one half dozen pairs stockings, one dozen handkerchiefs, two or three white skirts, two pairs of shoes, and one pair of slippers, two or three kimonos or dressing sacks, one silk or nice dark petticoat, a good comb and hairbrush, a nailbrush, toothbrush, and other toilet articles which her own habits will suggest. She should also have a bath robe or long gown of some sort.

This little list is the very least that any girl should start out with. For the outer clothes she must have a good woolen dress of a dark color, well made and not too much trimmed; a tailor-made suit would be a fine foundation around which to plan her other gowns; besides this there should be a black or dark blue skirt which would serve to wear with shirt waists; and of these she should have at least one half dozen. A pretty fancy dress of some light material of a dainty color would be one which she could wear on many occasions, as many invitations are extended to brides. She would not care to appear every time in her wedding gown, and a little gown of silk or fancy material would just do. If the bride in-
tends to do her own work she should have a couple of nice gingham house dresses or shirt waists and skirts, and some kitchen aprons made of three widths of gingham reaching from the armscye to the bottom of the skirt; one width is gathered to fit across the chest and one each for the back; these are placed on a band one inch wide and caught by a strap over each shoulder; they save all of the dress, and if long cuffs or half sleeves are pulled up on the arm from the wrist, she may wear a nice dress under the apron, and by simply taking the apron and sleeves off is ready to see a caller at a moment’s notice and be spared the annoyance of being seen in untidy garments.

A WEDDING GOWN is supposed to be made of white material, as white is symbolic of purity. Whether the gown be elaborate or simple I would recommend white. We have given the girl of moderate means some suggestions for more practical gowns, now let us think of the wedding dress. If the wedding is to be solemnized in the summer what prettier material could be suggested than Swiss or chiffon organdy? It may be made very elaborately with lace, tucks, and insertions, and lined with taffeta silk, or if a softer lining is more
to her taste a pretty soft lawn trimmed with lace and insertion will do just as well. A very nice quality of Swiss or chiffon organdy may be had for fifty cents a yard; with a dress of this style a dainty summer hat of white leghorn trimmed in some pretty fashion with white would be appropriate. A bridal veil should never be worn with a short dress; a veil calls for a dress with a train.

White voile, eolienne, net, crêpe de Chine, chiffon crêpe, chiffon cloth, and the different weights of satin are all appropriate for wedding gowns; any one of these requires a silk lining throughout. Lace robes are very fashionable and can be bought ready to put together; the skirts have the flounces sewn on, and all that is necessary to complete the robe skirt is to join the back seam and hang it. A lace robe should be lined with silk or satin and interlined with mousseline de soie. The waist of a robe usually requires quite a little planning; this may be made easier if the mesh of the robe is matched when the dress is bought, and a couple of yards of net secured to help out in the making of the waist.

All-over Valenciennes lace may be made into a very handsome wedding gown. Flouncing to match the all-over lace may be had; if the lace has
a creamy color it makes it more elegant. Old family heirlooms of lace have a creamy or yellowed appearance and are much prized, especially for wedding gowns or trimming for them.

Crêpe de Chine will always be a popular material for wedding dresses. It has a clinging tendency and falls in very graceful folds; the trimming may be made of the material in tucks, shirring, cordings, bands, joined by a catstitch, or fagoting; in fact, any and all manner of hand work is appropriate for crêpe de Chine; with a transparent yoke the gown will be handsome enough for either a church or a home wedding. With this style gown a veil may be worn if the skirt is trimmed.

Satin, of course, is one of the most pretentious of materials, and should be made in the princess style, a lace yoke and bertha of some fine lace being a most beautiful trimming for the waist. The lower part of the sleeve might also be of lace. The lines of a princess gown should be beautifully fitted and stitched, as any deviation from an even stitching will be very apparent. The train of a white satin princess gown should rest on the floor at least one yard, a seventy-two-inch train; that, measuring from the waist to the end of the train,
is the usual length. Some extreme trains have been of sufficient length to rest two yards on the floor. A reliable pattern of a train should be secured, as it is a very difficult matter to make a successful one. The lining of the skirt should extend to the end of the train; it should be padded on the inside to the depth of half a yard with sheet wadding; this padding should be hidden with a facing of taffeta or the lining of the dress. Padding gives weight to the bottom of a skirt; little lead weights should be covered with pieces of silk and sewn at intervals around the bottom of the train; a dust ruffle must be placed on the inside and one on the outside of the lining to give a soft finish to it. The satin should be tacked to the lining with tie tacks—long stitches taken through both skirts and pulled out so as to make a half-inch space between them; these threads are buttonholed and in this way secure the skirts together. Orange blossoms are considered the proper flowers for a bride; some of them may be arranged at the front of the corsage.

The tulle which is worn for bridal veils is manufactured especially for this purpose, and is about three yards in width. The veil should be a little longer than the length from the top of the
head to the end of the train; this extra length is to allow for the graceful fall which it must have. It should be long enough to fall over the face to the knees, and may be arranged on the head by a milliner who has taste in such things. Orange blossoms are also worn in the hair. Long gloves of white suède or glacé kid should be worn; one of the seams of the ring finger should be ripped; it may be slipped back from the finger during the ceremony, in this way avoiding much confusion. The bouquet should be of some white flowers, such as orchids, lilies of the valley, or roses. The most fashionable is the shower bouquet, which consists of the bouquet proper of roses, etc., with ribbons hanging from it, on the ends of which are tied little bouquets of lilies of the valley or other small flowers. Some brides prefer to carry a prayer book or small Bible.

The stockings worn with an elegant costume of this kind should be of white silk, and the shoes of fine white satin or kid.

For a quiet wedding after which there is no reception many brides prefer to wear their going-away gowns: gray is the prime favorite. A tailored suit is quite the proper kind of a gown, and may be very handsomely trimmed with stitching,
buttons, braid, or embroidery. With this suit (skirt and coat), as very few tailored cloth waists are worn now, a handsome white lingerie waist may be worn. This waist may be quite elegant with hand work and lace, etc. Black ties or shoes should be worn and white or gray gloves. The hat should be a smart affair to set off the gown. A veil of chiffon or lace, either gray or white, should complete the costume. Blue, brown, or tan are worn at weddings, but gray seems to be the most appropriate, next to white.

A long coat of pongee, rajah, or mohair is a very useful addition to a bridal outfit; it saves the dress from dust, and as every bride wishes to look her best on arrival at her destination, this wearing of a traveling coat will help her to this end. It may be made of the box-coat model, reaching to the very bottom of the skirt; it may be made with a cape or set of capes, and the sleeves should be made quite full, gathered into a cuff at the wrist; the fronts should be double breasted, or arranged in such a manner that the coat will cover the entire gown when it is necessary.

This coat need not be an expensive one—if made of mohair, a very good quality may be had for this purpose for $1 a yard; as it is wide—about
fifty inches—about seven or eight yards would make a very fine coat; the pattern may be gotten from the usual pattern concerns. No lining is necessary, and the only other expense would be one yard of taffeta, which would be cut into bias strips to finish the inside seams, and some pretty buttons.

Pongee would come a little higher in price, as it is of a narrow width, but is a very good investment, however, as pongee may be used for something or other while there is a bit of it left. It may be washed and ironed, and if this is carefully done will look as good as new. It should be washed in a lather of fine white soap and warm water, thoroughly rinsed in warm water, hung out in the air until nearly dry, then ironed with a medium hot iron on the wrong side. If it should become thoroughly dried in the air do not sprinkle it, as it will iron in little glazed spots; instead, place a large, damp cloth over the whole piece or garment, run the iron over it, and the steam will dampen the material more evenly. Then remove the damp cloth and iron as usual on the wrong side; hang the garment or piece in the air to dry. Pongee may be had for seventy-five cents a yard, and a
very good quality for that, all silk and about twenty-four inches in width. It will take about twelve yards to make a nice coat.

Rajah silk, which is a loose silk material, rough in texture, may be had for about $1 a yard and requires about the same amount as for a pongee coat.